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513 If a wife refuses cohabitation, there is usually a good reason, but a reason that has nothing to do with sexual incompatibility. The husband concerned will perhaps solicit the aid of the old women; but never will he dare say that he can go elsewhere for his pleasure, for she has equal power to retaliate in that manner. The Lovedu know
§33 of the belief of other tribes that continued sexual intercourse after
§43 pregnancy builds up the child forming in the womb. They also continue intercourse, but they do not stress, and even deny, that semen builds up the foetus. It is worth noting that sexual intercourse at a late stage of pregnancy (after the seventh month) is considered not quite correct, and this ideal is reflected in the anger of the midwives, who may reprimand the husband if they find signs, as they think, of his semen on the new-born infant. Nor is the sexual act brought into relation with so many special occasions as elsewhere; it has not to any extent been institutionalised in connexion with dangerous or new enterprises, as is the case among the Shangana-Tonga in their midst. Full coitus is taboo while a mother suckles her child; the milk of the new pregnancy will poison the child, but a child is not sent away when sexual relations are
§42 resumed. Even the theme of fertility is handled with moderation or submerged under a mass of ritual. A wife is not ochred on her first pregnancy and, in those ceremonies that are directed to fertility, this motive is kept far in the background. Likewise, barrenness in a woman is not regarded as entitling a man to nullify his marriage and, when a substitute is sent, the children are presumed to be, not the children of the barren wife, but of the substitute. The conception of 'buying a womb' is negatived by the fact that full *mayusalo* is given for the substitute, who is not subservient to, but independent of, the barren wife. These arrangements also imply that barrenness is not a great humiliation.
537 A married woman is theoretically denied the right of having children if her husband is impotent or absents himself for years. In practice, 'picking up children in the veld' is realistically tolerated, but it must be done surreptitiously, for the custom in other tribes, whereby the husband appoints a 'bull', is not approved. A wife can never be lent to another, for, as the proverb runs, 'About clothes you may say, "Lend them to me," but never about a woman' (*ng'adimemi gi a guwo, musadia a wa ng'adimo*).

Marital fidelity is not a matter of great importance; a father will reprimand his adulterous son, but only because in his pursuit of other women he fails in his duty to look after his wife—that is the main thing in marriage. Similarly a wife's adultery can never be the cause of divorce; but it must be judicious; it must not offend the proprieties. No doubt a man has greater opportunities than a woman and before marriage one may speak of a double standard of morality, but after marriage the differences are small. Both a husband and a wife can administer medicines to the other partner, making extra-marital irregularities very dangerous to health. A wife during pregnancy by a lover is also a grave danger to her husband. On the whole, the remarkable thing is, not that there is marital infidelity, but that there is so little of it. After all, a man may not 'mix' his wives; he cannot go from the one to the other; he cannot bring

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home a second wife until his first has had a child or, more usually to-day, until she is pregnant; and he has to avoid his wife to some extent until the baby is weaned, a period of three years or even more.

If a wife is barren, a substitute may, as we have seen, be sent. The whole subject of substitution is too large for adequate treatment here, but some aspects of it may be mentioned. Among the Lovedu a man may marry two sisters in the ordinary course of events, quite irrespective of whether the first married has prematurely died or is barren, but the wife's sister is not specially reserved for the husband as if he had a prior right to her. The marriage is desirable, not enjoined by the society, when it is known that the sisters will co-operate and care for each other's children. In the case of barrenness, there is substitution, but the substitute wife is not a subservient wife. It is not a case of true substitution, but a strengthening of a weak link in the chain of bride and cattle exchanges. A barren wife cannot be discarded; on the contrary, the insistence upon treating her well, though it recognizes, also represses the tendency to regard her position with misgivings. Men make a great effort, by treating a barren wife well, to elicit the praise of others, especially the queen, whose continuous interest is a guarantee that the virtue will be idealized. There are other considerations that reinforce the great concern of a female ruler for peacefulness and good relations. A man who ill-treats his barren wife need expect no reciprocity from her parents, and he has no weapons against them. He cannot demand back his cattle, for failure to have children does not vitiate the cattle exchanges. He cannot even initiate the procedure whereby his parents-in-law will send him a substitute. On the contrary, he must await their pleasure and if they do decide to send a substitute, he must *nyusela* (give cattle), and he may be asked more *munyusalo* than for her sister. But if he has been a good husband and is poor, less may be asked. A man realizes that the virtue of treating a barren wife well is richly rewarded.

Similarly, a husband whose wife has died prematurely without issue is in the same position: he has no right to demand a substitute or, in default, the return of the *munyusalo*. When he is offered his wife's sister or other suitable substitute, he must hand over cattle for her. It is true that the substitute sets up the house that 'has fallen', but the really important point is that the relationship created by the cattle exchanges should be maintained. A husband must report the death of his wife with an ox; he must call her people to the ceremony ending the mourning period; he must continue his visits as son-in-law; he must always be prepared to help his parents-in-law. All this will not necessarily induce them to give him a substitute; and if he neglects these things, the potential right to such substitute is not effaced. On the other hand, his parents-in-law must continue to honour him when he visits, they must still send him beer, they must acknowledge relationship with him. If they do not do these things, if they spread tales that he has been the cause of the death of their daughter, the relationship may be broken; and consequently the claim to a substitute, non-existent before, now is given recognition. If they value the link broken by their conduct they must reforge it by sending a substitute; if they do not, their action has already caused it to snap

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CHAPTER XII

THE PURSUIT OF HEALTH

Anatomical conceptions in relation to the science of drugs and of healing—cardinal categories of the causation of disease—training for the medical profession—divinatory dice as a method of diagnosis.

LOVEDU therapy is linked, on the one hand with law, and on the other with medicine, magic, witchcraft, sorcery, and religion. But it is more closely interwoven with these last than with the first. If disease and death are the main objective of witchcraft and sorcery, disease is also the occasion of most religious rites, medicine the means of restoring the health of the human body and law the guarantee of the well-being of the social organism. Law and medicine are both largely concerned with the results of dissension between men. Open strife, which leads to social evils, is examined by the *khuvi* and resolved under the guidance of its wisdom; secret malice, which causes death and disease, is diagnosed by the bones and treated by the doctor; but for the detection of the deeds of darkness the *khuvi* calls in the aid of the doctor. The *khuvi* relies upon public discussion and its genius effects contact and reconciliation between one litigant and another, while the doctor uses private divination and his art inspires the consultant with confidence against his secret enemy. The social psychology of the one is the counterpart of the psycho-therapy of the other. But we must not think of them as essentially different worlds, the one primarily natural and the other primarily supernatural. The medico-magico-religious is to the Lovedu rather a tangible world of mundane arrangements and subject to 'natural' forces than a cosmos, inscrutable in its configuration and governed by 'supernatural' destinies. In truth, Lovedu healing is based to some extent upon observed relations between cause and effect though more largely upon practices and beliefs which, though they will not stand the tests of our science, constitute the psychological therapy of the society. We are far too apt to discount the value of their empirical body of knowledge, instead of using it to construct a sound scientific approach to medicine. We can also do better than scorn as superstitious absurdities those indispensable techniques of medicine which, because our medical profession takes little account of them, enable the charlatan and quack to flourish among us.

To understand Lovedu conceptions of the causation of disease, we must orientate ourselves from their knowledge of human anatomy. It is indeed very meagre. All they know has been gleaned indirectly from the slaughter of cattle and goats, for they practise neither embalming nor dissection of corpses. As a result, though they have names for all the more important organs of the body, they are not always sure of their correct location. Nor have they much idea of physiological function. They know that the stomach and intestines are digestive organs and that the bladder contains urine, but lungs and the diaphragm are vaguely connected with breathing. The womb, ovaries, and testicles are definitely reproductive organs, but in medical practice this function is obscured by the role of an

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internal snake believed to be intimately bound up with fecundity and childbirth. Every one is said to have a snake in his stomach. It is not a real snake, yet it is conceived of as having a head and of being able to crawl up to a man's neck (causing what we call indigestion) and running back again when he coughs. When a person has stomach-ache it is often said, 'The snake is biting,' while dysentery is referred to as 'red' or 'white snake', according to the stage of the disease. The most important function of this snake, and one that forms a common subject of conversation in connection with barrenness, is, however, its reproductive one. It is believed that semen comes from a man's snake; if his snake is 'no good', a child will not be born. The snake of a woman is sometimes identified with the womb and for conception it is necessary that this snake should accept the semen. There are two possibilities which prevent conception: either the snake's head may be wrongly orientated or it may catch up the semen, but spit it out again. In the first case the remedy is to 'turn round' its head by medical treatment, in which very often the womb of a scapegoat is used. In the second case, since the snake rejects the semen unless the bloods of husband and wife agree and the snake of the man may be as much at fault as that of the woman, it is usual to include both husband and wife in treatment for barrenness. If six to nine months elapse after marriage without conception having taken place, steps are at once taken to set the matter right.

Though the Lovedu have no knowledge of the circulation of the blood, they assign to it properties which lie at the basis of their medical theory. Blood is so generally believed to be the root of most ills that a Native describing his symptoms always says, 'I am pierced by blood.' Rheumatism, stiffness after exercise, a pain or swelling in any part of the body, is attributed to blood that has collected there or blood which is 'boiling', making the body hot and feverish. Swellings of all kinds, including goitre, are therefore always cupped to get rid of surplus blood, and blood-letting as a cure for headache and other ills is as popular with the Lovedu as it was in Europe not so long ago. The beating of the heart is not believed to be continuous: it is associated with sudden fright and with illness; but, though it is known that often the heart beats loudly when one is not ill, they have no idea why it should do so. Veins contain blood, but go by the same name as sinews and muscles, all of which are believed to give strength to the body. Occasionally, though infrequently, individuals are to be found who have other ideas. Thus David, a Christian who has often worked in towns and has a mind of his own, has his own theory as to the function of the heart, a deduction from his observations on dying fowls. He believes that the heart beats, not to circulate, but to exclude the blood, and the moment the heart stops beating the blood enters it, causing death to the fowl or person.

753 A considerable list of terms for different diseases indicates that distinctions are recognized, but it is easy to be misled into believing that the Natives' knowledge is greater than it really is. Some terms are peculiarly Native without any corresponding category among us, but many, like smallpox, measles, mumps, fever, consumption, migraine, syphilis, epilepsy, show appreciation of causes or symptoms which fit into our scheme of

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821 has been ceased), and we were told that in the old days men of import-
527 ance used to come and condole with (*ku ewela*) the chief on such a day, as though to sympathize with her in the frustration of her efforts. There are other holidays associated with rain. On the day after the first rain of the season has fallen no hoeing or fieldwork is to be done. Such a holiday is called *ku-nkki-ntswe* (do not cut me), as if the earth, believed still to be hot, children being broken up by the hoeing. Such a holiday is also observed after the rain charms have 'beaten' the new tassels and first-fruits of the year and when, any time during the summer, rain falls after two or three weeks drought, it is called *mwene* (guest or stranger) and the next day observed as a holiday, for one honours a guest.

766 Wrong burials which stop the rain are righted by the use of *mafugo*
821 medicine and the water obtained by squeezing the undigested stomach
789 contents (*mantsane*) of a sheep down a hole made in the grave with a stick
892 and reaching the body. This is thought to disperse the 'wind' and cool the grave. The flesh of the sheep is eaten without salt. The conception is thus of a grave agitated by ghostly heat and wind, which may be 'laid' by 'cooling', or, as we might say, calming, in the treble sense often of pacifying [the ghost], modifying [the heat], and causing [the wind] to subside. *Mafugo*, the medicine so important in the removal of impediments to rain, has to be obtained from the queen and a specially appointed person is responsible for doling it out in horns when needed. The office is not conceived to be hereditary, but it has been held by a Mudiga family for some time, being handed down by father to son. When the last official in charge of *mafugo* died, his son was an unmarried man too young for the responsibility of office. Some five years later (1938), when the queen decided that he should assume charge, he protested his youth, though he then had two children, fearing that after contact with the medicine he might forget to wash his hands before eating and thus be rendered impotent. In this he had the full support of his mother, who prevailed upon the queen to allow an older relative to undertake the work provisionally; but the present position is that, should this old man be away, the heir to the office will have to act. Whether *mafugo* is identical with the rain medicine of the rain-pots is not quite clear; but, whatever its ingredients may be, it is considered extremely dangerous, liable to rob men and women of their fertility, and great care is thus necessary when working with it.

789 Sometimes it is said that 'the country is not right' (*naha a e loge*) and
372 then there is a special ceremony in which all the fires in the country are put out with *mafugo*. No generally recognized set of circumstances lead up to such a line of action, nor is there any idea that the fires are defiled in any way. It is simply looked upon as a method of getting rain when there is drought, resorted to when the divining bones of the doctor declare it to be necessary. People sometimes say, 'Fires are put out to usher in a new year,' but this does not mean that putting out the fires is an annual ceremony, as it is, for instance, among the Pedi. The word 'year' must not be taken literally, just as it does not refer to an abstract period of time in the phrase, 'The year has been infected by *ku khomo*', when what is meant is that the rain charms have 'weakened' (*ku khoma*). In this ceremony

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girls below the age of puberty are sent to draw water for the *mafuga* which the queen's rain-doctor prepares for the occasion, and after a day or two, when the medicine froths up (*ku pukula*), boys are sent with a horn of *mafuga* and a brush of *Hundi* creeper (*Adenia gummifera*) to every village in the land. First they heat medicine on the fire of the men's courtyard and thereafter on the threshold and hearth of every hut. The ashes are cleared away by an old woman, for so dangerous is the medicine used that any man, woman, or child entering the hut before it has been smeared with dung will *khume* and be unable to have children. A new fire is kindled in the men's courtyard, whence each woman fetches a brand for her own hut, for it is taboo to kindle a fire from any other. In return for her firebrand, each woman gives the men stamped mealies or groundnuts, which they eat in the *khuvo*. Each married man in turn must give something to the boys who have brought *mafuga*, usually 1*s*. or a fowl (in the old days an arrow or mealies), but often also tobacco or other gifts for, as '*mafuga* does not choose' (*mafuga a u khethe*), anything may be given. Each boy must give 1*s*. or a fowl to the keeper of *mafuga*, keeping the rest as a reward for his labours. It is taboo to work in the fields on the day after *mafuga*. In 1927 some boys, too lazy to fetch the medicine, took matters into their own hands and made a mixture of ash and water, which they used in their rounds. They were discovered and made to pay five head of cattle each and the ceremony had to be performed again.

When the divining bones diagnose drought as due to ancestors, steps have to be taken for a sacrifice at an ancestral grave. Any one of the close relatives of the queen can cause drought: sometimes it is the queen's mother Lenkhali, buried at Khaja; sometimes it is Mugodo's sister, buried at Mudzinoni; in 1925–6 it was Mulogwane, the queen's brother, who complained that he was buried in the Christian cemetery, instead of in the shade of the forest. A sacrifice for rain will take place only after it has become clear that, in spite of steps taken to *lowa* the queen by means of money or dancing, she fails by her ordinary methods to cause the rain to fall.

January, 1938, was hot and dry. Several headmen had been to *lowa*, but no rain fell. Important district heads and councillors thus began to 'travel about, having the bones thrown', to discover the cause, while the queen herself also sent messengers to various well-known diviners. The reply came, 'Seek ye a black sheep. Go with it to show your care for the spirits and you shall see that it will rain nicely.' As is so often the case, no indication was given of the cause of their complaint; the suggestion as to the practical measures to be taken and the identity of the troublesome spirits were quite sufficient. The queen, however, remained inactive; it was not for her to take the initiative till her people humbly begged her to do so. On February 11th three of the most important men at the capital approached her, saying, 'People are crying. Help us.' Thereupon she impatiently replied, 'People tire me. The year was well established, but they have "weakened" (*ku fighela*) it. They want me to be troubled.' She implied that she had safeguarded the year, but that the people themselves, by breaking rain taboos and by their evil works and witchcraft, had undermined that safeguard. When the councillors continued

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say, equally divided between the ancestors and the rain queen. And it is she also who controls, in the interest of social well-being, that half of the cosmic order upon which men's life and happiness are conceived most vitally to depend. This dependence upon her and the moral imperatives of the kinship obligations between her and her subjects are the main factors conditioning the Lovedu outlook upon the world and upon society. Their ritual ideology, linking the queen's mystical powers to the welfare of society, expresses their most important conceptions of the ordering of the natural world; their kinship ideology, incorporated into the political system and converting political into moral obligations, provides the main principles governing men's relations to one another. Agreement and mutual adjustment between individuals become ultimate values which have an overriding validity in determining the rights and duties of man to man. The Lovedu political pattern follows that of the centralized states of the South Bantu; yet it is not force but reciprocity, not administrative machinery but ties of sentiment, not inflexible rules but agreement, that are the great principles of social and political obligation.

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Myths and Origins

The Lovedu are not given to speculation about first beginnings or final causes. There is no world-dawn or far-off mythical event when the order of nature and of society was irrevocably instituted. There is not even a sky-god to account for lightning and thunder or to furnish men with an explanation of stellar phenomena, such as the movement of heavenly bodies. Some of the larger stars are named, for example the Pleiades which are associated with hoeing time, but the association seems to be a vestige diffused from another culture and has no real significance, whether pragmatic or mystical. A vague, hardly ever invoked myth attributes the creation of the world and man to *Khuzwane* who left his footprints on certain rocks in the north when they were still new and soft. But the act of creation, like *Khuzwane* himself, is too remote, too unrelated to present realities, to be of any concern to men; and they find no place in, nor do they in any way influence, the Lovedu philosophy of the cosmos or of society. The Lovedu apparently feel the need to posit a first or final cause, but such a cause has not continued to operate as a force. An inexplicable affliction such as sterility appears sometimes to be attributed to *Mudimo*, the creator-god of the Sotho, who, according to Lovedu thought, is identical with *Khuzwane*; but *Mudimo* in this context is to be equated with a conditional destiny, and thus does not imply belief in fatalism since the course of events can be deflected by man-made medicines. Nor is there any supplication of the creator, for the Lovedu do not conceive of any link between their ancestor spirits and the creator: *Khuzwane* cannot be approached through the ancestors.

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Thus origins of the cosmic order and wonders of celestial phenomena do not exercise the Lovedu mind. When Simeon, a close relative of the queen, whom we had interested in these things, asked the old men about them,

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